

Flora CUSD #35 Newsletter

Children are our most precious possession.

April 2015

Community Forum Rescheduled for April 13th

On April 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the FHS auditorium we will be hosting a community meeting. The first part of the forum will focus on our progress towards meeting our goals as well as getting input for future improvements and activities. We will also provide specific details about the elementary construction progress and answer any questions about the transition to the new building. We plan to have the transportation department available at the end of the forum to let you know the tentative plan (times, locations, etc.) for next year.

Like many areas that rely on state funding, education has seen significant cuts to funding over the past five years. One area this has been particularly troubling is transportation. While school districts are supposed to get 80% reimbursement on equipment, miles, etc. each year, the past few years we have only received 72% of the 80% amount. Each year, we are supposed to get four transportation reimbursement payments during the course of the school year. Even with the proration, we have only received one payment to date this year and the speculation is that we may only receive one additional payment. The loss of the final two transportation payments this year equate to a loss of \$275,000 in revenue for transportation. For many of our current elementary schools, we are able to claim reimbursement for transporting students that are within a mile and a half from the school because of rules that were in place when the schools were first occupied. However, with the completion of the new elementary school in the fall, the state guideline of non-transport/non-reimbursable within a mile and a half of the school will have to be used. As a result, we will no longer receive any reimbursement for costs when transporting the majority of students that live within a mile and a half of the new elementary school.

When looking at the mile and a half radius that the state would designate as a walk zone, we feel that due to traffic, sidewalk availability, etc. these areas would present safety concerns and therefore we need to provide transportation in these areas regardless of reimbursement. With the likelihood of continuing proration to transportation and to provide transportation to all areas, we are looking at modifying our current transportation process. Currently, we provide door to door stops to Pre-K through third grade students and provide group stops for 4th through 12th grade students. In order to accommodate the larger number of students that will need to be transported, we are exploring the possibility of moving to door to door service for Pre-K and kindergarten students and group stops for 1st through 5th grade students. For safety purposes, we are hoping to strategically structure our group stops to keep the distance of drop off to a block or less especially for the younger age students. Additionally, we have worked closely with our local police and sheriff department and they plan to patrol the group stop areas during morning pickup and evening return. While they will not be present at all areas, they will be making the rounds to help assist in enhancing the safety of the students.

We have had and continue to have tremendous community input and support for our school district! We look forward to continuing to work with the community parents, staff, and students to make our school district the best it can be. Please join us if you can on **April 13th** to discuss this change as well as other initiatives as we strive to continually improve. Please contact the Unit Office at 618-662-2412 or Joel Hackney at jhackney@floraschools.com with any questions or suggestions.

Auditorium Naming Ceremony on April 14th

Please join us for a short ceremony prior to the FHS spring band concert at 7:00 p.m. in the FHS auditorium as we rename the auditorium in honor of Mr. Penry.

Important Upcoming Dates:

April 2nd-Spring Break

April 3rd-Good Friday-No School

April 6th-Spring

April 8th-Spring School Pictures-District Wide

April 10th-Mid-term for 4th Quarter

April 13th-Community Meeting-7:00 p.m.-FHS Auditorium

April 14th-FHS Band Spring Concert/Auditorium Naming Ceremony

April 15th-Curriculum Advisory Committee Meeting-Unit Office-8:45 a.m.

April 17th-Early Dismissal-2:00 p.m.

April 20th-Board of Education Meeting-Unit Office-5:30 p.m.

April 25th-Flora Academic Foundation Banquet

April 27th-PARCC End of Year Exams Start

McEndree/Washington K Patriotic Program at McEndree School-1:00 p.m.